AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

Please amend the claims as follows. No new matter has been added by way of these amendments, which have been made for clarification purposes pursuant to the Examiner Interview of May 6, 2003.

[c1] (Currently Amended) An orthopedic appliance, comprising a wedge for placement under the phalanges of a toe and not extending under a first metatarsal, the wedge having a top surface adapted to support the toe and a bottom surface, wherein an angle of inclination between the top surface and the bottom surface of the wedge is between 1 and 60 degrees.

[c2] (Original) The orthopedic appliance of claim 1, wherein the angle of inclination is between 10 and 20 degrees.

[c3] (Original) The orthopedic appliance of claim 1, wherein the wedge is formed integrally as part of a piece of footwear.

[c4] (Original) The orthopedic appliance of claim 1, wherein the wedge comprises an elastomeric material.

[c5] (Original) The orthopedic appliance of claim 1, wherein the wedge comprises a material selected from the group consisting of: cork, leather, resilient foam, and thermoplastic material.

[c6] (Original) The orthopedic appliance of claim 1, wherein a concave depression is formed in the top surface.

[c7] (Original) The orthopedic appliance of claim 1, further comprising at least one fastener.

[c8] (Original) The orthopedic appliance of claim 7, wherein the at least one fastener comprises a plurality of bands disposed adjacent the top surface.

[c9] (Original) The apparatus of claim 7, wherein the at least one fastener comprises a sheath disposed over the top surface.

[c10] (Currently Amended) An apparatus for orthopedic treatment, comprising:

a top surface adapted to support the phalanges of a toe and not extending under a first metatarsal;

a bottom surface; and

a support which maintains a toe at an angle of inclination between the top surface and the bottom surface.

[c11] (Original) The apparatus of claim 10, wherein the angle of inclination is between 1 and 60 degrees.

[c12] (Original) The apparatus of claim 10, wherein the angle of inclination is between 10 and 20 degrees.

[c13] (Original) The apparatus of claim 10, wherein the support is formed integrally as part of a piece of footwear.

[c14] (Original) The apparatus of claim 10, wherein a concave depression is formed in the top surface.

[c15] (Original) The apparatus of claim 10, further comprising at least one fastener.

[c16] (Previously Amended) The apparatus of claim 15, wherein the at least one fastener comprises a plurality of bands disposed adjacent the top surface.

[c17] (Previously Amended) The apparatus of claim 15, wherein the at least one fastener comprises a sheath disposed over the top surface.

[c18] (Currently Amended) A method for improving stability of a foot during ambulation, comprising:

providing a wedge having a top surface positioned substantially under the phalanges of a toe and not extending under a first metatarsal, and a bottom surface; and

elevating the toe to a predetermined angle of inclination using the wedge.

[c19] (Original) The method of claim 18, wherein the angle of inclination is between approximately 1 and 60 degrees.

[c20] (Original) The apparatus of claim 18, wherein the angle of inclination is between 10 and 20 degrees.

[c21] (Previously Amended) The method of claim 18, further comprising fixing the bottom surface of the wedge to a piece of footwear.

[c22] (Previously Amended) The method of claim 18, further comprising fixing the wedge to the toe using at least one band.

[c23] (Original) The method of claim 18, further comprising fixing the wedge to the toe using a sheath.